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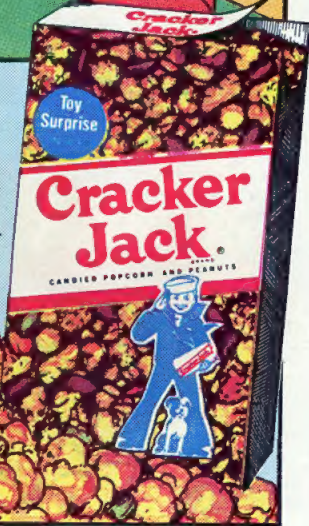
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"Call me Shang-Chi, as my father did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: that my name means 'The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit'; and that my body could be forged into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on Earth... and that to honor him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my name."

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MASTER OF KUNG FU!

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER



"HONAN, CHINA--THE FORTRESS RETREAT OF FU MANCHU, AND THE PLACE WHERE I FIRST BEHELD LIGHT."

"IN RETURNING TO THE PLACE OF MY BIRTH, I HAVE EMBARKED ON WHAT MAY BE AN EASY PATH TO DEATH OR AN AGONIZING CLIMB TO REBIRTH."

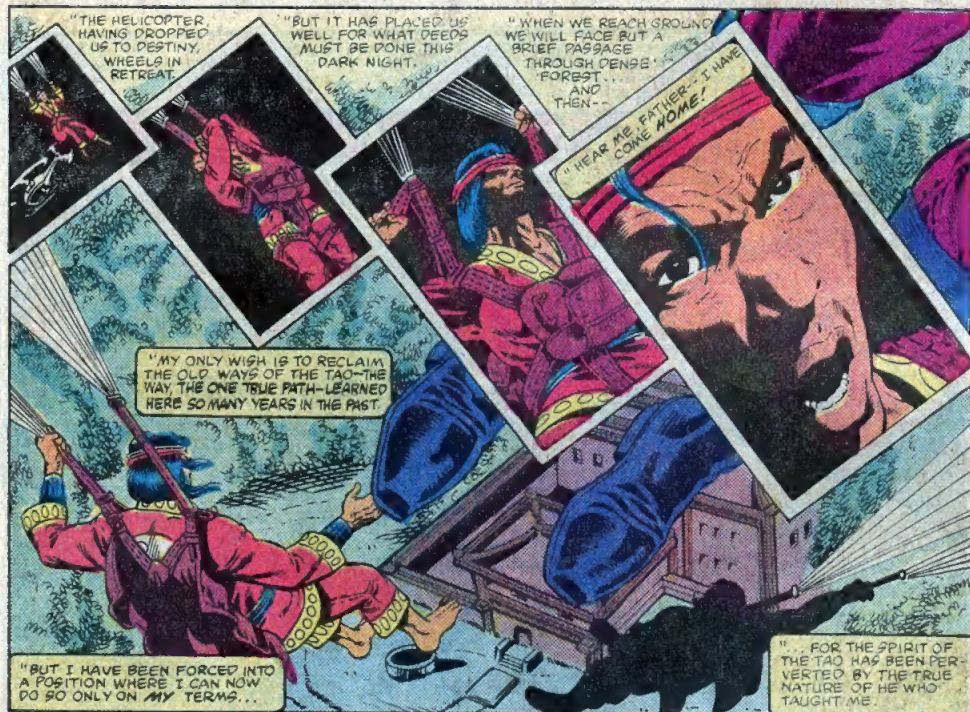
"CONSCIOUSLY, I HAVE ASKED FOR NEITHER WAY, BUT I AM STEELING NOW FOR BOTH. FOR I REALIZE THAT MY SUB-CONSCIOUS SELF, IN TURMOIL, DEMANDS ONE OR THE OTHER."

"I'D FORGOTTEN HOW BLOODY AWESOME THIS PLACE IS..."

"NOW WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO SAY A THING LIKE THAT, TARR? JUST BECAUSE IT REEKS OF EVIL IN EVERY STONE..."

DOUG MOENCH
SCRIPTER
JANICE CHIANG-COLORIST
CHRISTIE SCHEEL-EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
GENE DAY
PENCILER/INKER

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"THE HELICOPTER
HAVING DROPPED
US TO DESTINY,
WHEELS IN
RETREAT."

"BUT IT HAS PLACED US
WELL FOR WHAT DEEDS
MUST BE DONE THIS
DARK NIGHT."

"WHEN WE REACH GROUND
WE WILL FACE BUT A
BRIEF PASSAGE
THROUGH DENSE
FOREST...
AND
THEN--"

"HEAR ME FATHER-- I HAVE
COME HOME!"

"MY ONLY WISH IS TO RECLAIM
THE OLD WAYS OF THE TAO--THE
WAY THE ONE TRUE PATH--LEARNED
HERE SO MANY YEARS IN THE PAST."

"BUT I HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO
A POSITION WHERE I CAN NOW
DO SO ONLY ON *MY* TERMS..."

"... FOR THE SPIRIT OF
THE TAO HAS BEEN PER-
VERTED BY THE TRUE
NATURE OF HE WHO
TAUGHT ME

"ONLY BY RIDDING MYSELF
OF MY FATHER AND HIS
FALSE TEACHINGS CAN I
BEGIN ANEW."

THREE MEN
ASSAULTING FU'S
FORTRESS ALONE--
WE MUST BE BLOODY
INSANE.

IT IS INSANE, TARR--
REMAIN HERE AND I
WILL DO IT ALONE.

"A PARADOX--ONLY BY
DEFYING THE WAYS OF
THE TAO CAN I AGAIN FACE
THE TRUE PATH WITH NEW EYES"

HEY, NO PROBLEM,
TROOPS-- WE'RE ARMED TO
THE TEETH. GELIGNITE,
RADIO, DETONATORS, STEN-
GUNS, GRENADES...

RESTON'S RIGHT,
CHINAMAN-- I WAS
ONLY LAUGHIN' IN
THE DARK.

"IT WILL TAKE A STRONG
ACT, A DARK DEED I WISH
NOT TO COMMIT, BUT
SINCE I MUST-- I AM
READY."

BESIDES, IT'S ALREADY
BEEN SETTLED--AS LONG
AS SIR DENIS IS MISSING,
WE'RE IN THIS
TOGETHER."

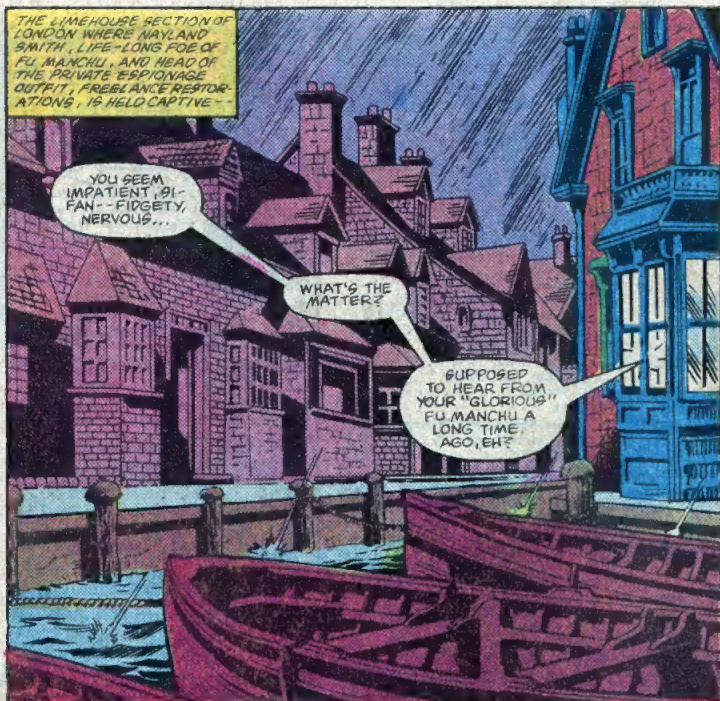
NOW QUIET ARGUIN',
CHINAMAN-- AND LEAD
THE WAY!"

"I COMPLY-- BUT FATE WILL
NEVERTHELESS SEE THAT
THE DARK DEED IS MINE
ALONE-- THE SAME FATE
WHICH HAS PARTED ME FROM
MY LOST ART OF TAO..."

"I AM NO
LONGER ONE
WITH MY
FRIENDS OR
ANYTHING
ELSE."

"UNTIL DEATH OR REBIRTH,
I SHALL BE A FORCE ALONE."

THE LIMEHOUSE SECTION OF LONDON WHERE NAYLAND SMITH, LIFE-LONG FOE OF FU MANCHU, AND HEAD OF THE PRIVATE ESPIONAGE OUT-FIT, FREELANCE RESTORATIONS, IS HELD CAPTIVE--



DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITHOUT FURTHER ORDERS FROM THE "CELESTIAL FIEND, IS THAT IT?"

WELL YOU MAY AS WELL GIVE UP LADS, BECAUSE FU MANCHU HAS FAILED-- AGAIN-- JUST AS HE HAS EVERY OTHER TIME.



SHANG-CHI... BLACK JACK TARR... CLIVE RESTON... LEIKO WU... DARK ANGEL... MARK THOSE NAMES WELL, LADS...

... BECAUSE THEY'RE THE ONES WHO PROVED TO BE TOO MUCH FOR THE GLORIOUS, CELESTIAL, ALL MIGHTY FU-MANCHU.



AND ONE NAME MORE-- SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH...

I'M THE ONE WHO SNEERS AT YOUR EVERY VICIOUS THREAT AND COWARDLY BEATING!



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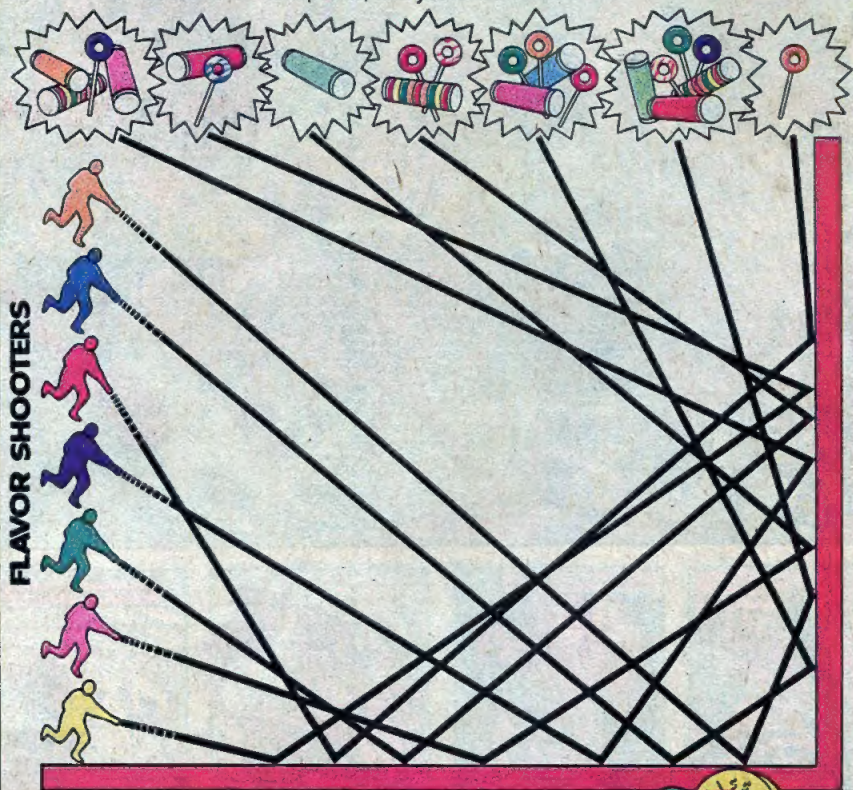
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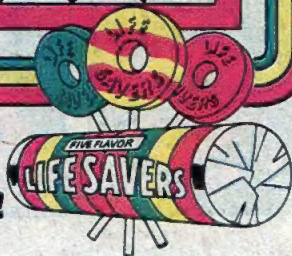
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ALMOST THERE.

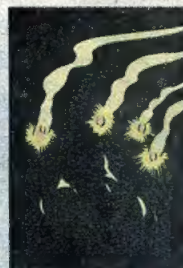
RESTON, YOU COVER ME AN' THE CHINAMAN WHILE WE HEAD FOR THE WALL AND--

NO.



NOT YET.

"LIGHTS..."



"... AND THUNDER FROM THE DARKNESS."



"THE SI-FAN-- DACTYLS, PHANSIGARS, HASHISHIN, ASSASSINS, LEGGARD CULTISTS, KNIGHTS TEMPLAR-- FU MANCHU'S DREAD ARMY OF THE NIGHT-- FIERCE WARRIORS MARCHING TOWARD WHAT HE CALLS THE GOLDEN DAWN..."

"... AND WHAT I CALL THE MADNESS OF RUNNING BEASTS."

"NOW THE PATH FORKS BEFORE ME-- AN EASY DEATH LOOMS CLOSER, WHILE DIFFICULT RE BIRTH TWISTS A MAZE INTO THE MIST."

"BUT DEATH AT THEIR HANDS WOULD NOT BE EASY; IT IS UNACCEPTABLE."

"TEN OF THEM WILL BE MINE, AND I WILL HOLD NONE OF MY MARTIAL ART IN CHECK, SHRINKING NOT FROM THE BRIGHT REALITY OF BLOOD. PATHS RUN TWO WAYS."



"BESIDES, THERE IS TIME TO THINK ABOUT..."



"... AND RESTON."

"THEY HAVE NO SUCH CHOICE TO MAKE, AND I LOVE THEM. I CAN NOT ABANDON THEM HERE."



"TORCHES FALL."



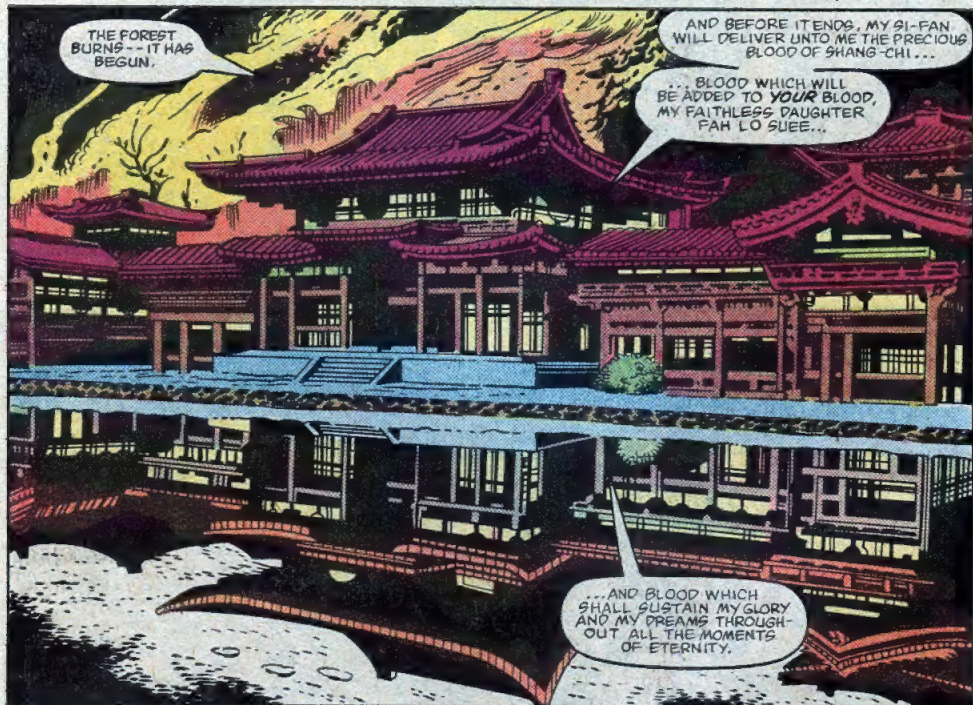
"AS DO HARD-FACED MEN."



"CRUEL-FACED BEASTS."



"THE FOREST BEGINS TO BURN."



THE FOREST
BURNS--IT HAS
BEGUN.

AND BEFORE IT ENDS, MY SI-FAN
WILL DELIVER UNTO ME THE PRECIOUS
BLOOD OF SHANG-CHI...

... BLOOD WHICH WILL
BE ADDED TO **YOUR** BLOOD,
MY FAITHLESS DAUGHTER,
FAH LO SUEE...

... AND BLOOD WHICH
SHALL SUSTAIN MY GLORY
AND MY DREAMS THROUGH-
OUT ALL THE MOMENTS
OF ETERNITY.



YOU SEE, MY DAUGHTER, THE EFFICACY OF THE
ELIXIR VITAE--MY SERUM OF IMMORTALITY--IS
DENIED BY A GROWING IMMUNITY IN MY
SYSTEM. THE PROBLEM CAN BE COUN-
TERACTED ONLY BY THE ADDITION OF
BLOOD--AND THE BLOOD MUST BE
BLOOD OF **MY** BLOOD.

MY VITALITY WAS
RESTORED IN ENGLAND
BY SHANG-CHI'S
BLOOD.

REGRETTABLY
I WAS FORCED
TO LEAVE LONDON
BEFORE DRAINING
ALL OF YOUR UNWILLING
BROTHER'S BLOOD...
BUT **YOURS**
WILL HAPPILY
SUFFICE.

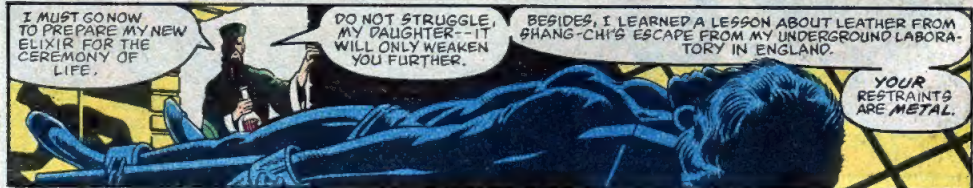


INDEED, I MUST
SOON UNDERGO THE
CEREMONY OF LIFE
ONCE AGAIN--BEFORE
THE ACCELERATED
PROCESS OF AGING
RESUMES...

BUT ONCE I HAVE SO FORTIFIED
MYSELF I WILL POSSESS MORE
THAN AMPLE STRENGTH TO RE-
CAPTURE AND DRAIN SHANG-
CHI... ALONG WITH YOU, MY
DAUGHTER.

Y-YOU'RE NOT MY FATHER... YOU'RE **NO ONE'S**
FATHER... YOU'RE INHUMAN... A VAMPIRE... A
DEVIL...

NO, SIMPLY
A **MAN**, FAH LO
SUEE, WHO HAS
USED HIS POWER
AND INTELLIGENCE
TO BECOME THE
ULTIMATE SURVIV-
OR IN A WORLD
OF THE WEAK
AND DYING.



I MUST GO NOW
TO PREPARE MY NEW
ELIXIR FOR THE
CEREMONY OF
LIFE.

DO NOT STRUGGLE,
MY DAUGHTER--IT
WILL ONLY WEAKEN
YOU FURTHER.

BESIDES, I LEARNED A LESSON ABOUT LEATHER FROM
SHANG-CHI'S ESCAPE FROM MY UNDERGROUND LABORA-
TORY IN ENGLAND.

YOUR
RESTRAINTS
ARE METAL.

"I THOUGHT
TEN WOULD
SUFFICE."

"INSTEAD, TWENTY HAVE
FALLEN TO MY FISTS."

"BUT AGAINST THE REST,
AT LEAST TARR AND
RESTON HAVE A CHANCE."

"THEY MAY
NOW BE
ABANDONED."

"THE WALL IS EASY, AS
IT HAS EVER BEEN--"

"--A MERE MASK FOR
THE TRUE DEFENSES
LURKING WITHIN THE
FORTRESS ITSELF."

"THE COURTS AND
GARDENS HAVE NOT
CHANGED SINCE I
LEFT THEM, AND THEIR
SIGHT AND SCENT
FLOODS ME WITH
MEMORIES OF YOUTH."

"SENSING IT ONLY
IN THE AIR, WHEN IT
IS TOO LATE, I ENTER
TOO FAST, TOO
EAGERLY."

"...AND THE FLOOR,
LIKE A TIMID LOVER,
RETREATS FROM MY
ADVANCE."

"I MUST REMEMBER
THAT THE GREATEST
DANGER LIES IN THE
FEELING."

"BUT MY INSTINCTS
ARE NOW BEYOND
HUMAN, AND I
FEEL NOTHING CAN
STOP ME."

"BUT HOW COULD I EVER SEE THOSE MANY
MEMORIES WITHOUT THE MANTLE OF EVIL
SHROUDING THE STRUCTURE IN WHICH THEY
WERE BORN?"

"HOW COULD I EVER
HAVE BEEN SO
BLIND?"

"--I MUST NOW BE WARY IN
EVERY STEP, ALERT TO EVERY
WHISPERY SHIFT OF AIR..."

"...FOR THE ENTIRE FORTRESS
WILL BE ONE LONG CHAMBER OF
TRAPS AND TORTURES."

"AND TOO, SHOULD I
SURVIVE TO THE END...
I MUST THEN FACE
MYSELF."



YOUR
PRESENCE
IS A BALM,
SON.

AND TO PRE-
VENT IF YOU
MUST HAVE
THE BLOOD
OF EITHER
SHANG-CHI
OR FAN LO
SUEE -- BUT
WHY DID YOU
NOT SIMPLY
CONTINUE TO
TAKE MY
BLOOD, CE-
LESTIAL FATHER?



YOU ARE
THE SON I
NEVER HAD

A MAN LIKE ME HAS
KNOWN MANY BETRAYALS.
MY DREAM IS TOO GREAT,
TOO VAST, TO BE ENCOM-
PASSED BY THE MORAL-
ITY OF LESSER MEN.

THAT IS WHY
I SUSPECTED
THAT EVEN YOUR
BROTHER, SHANG-
CHI --

-- ONCE HE HAD BEEN
RELEASED FROM THESE
WALLS AND POLLUTED
BY THE PETTY AND TRAN-
SIENT WAYS OF THE
WEST, MIGHT ALSO
BETRAY ME.

I KNEW I COULD
NOT BEAR TO
LOSE SUCH A
SON -- WHICH IS
WHY I CREATED
YOU, MY SON.
FROM SHANG-
CHI'S VERY
FLESH-TISSUE
WHEN HE WAS
BUT AN
INFANT...

... WITH A PROCEDURE
CALLED "CLONING" BY
WESTERN SCIENTISTS
TOO STUPID TO FULLY
UNDERSTAND IT EVEN
NOW.

THAT IS WHY I
KEPT YOU HERE, AND
RAISED YOU EXACTLY
AS SHANG-CHI WAS
RAISED.

THAT IS WHY I KEPT YOU
SHELTERED FROM SHANG-
CHI. AND THAT IS WHY I
HAVE NEVER PERMITTED
YOU TO LEAVE THESE
WALLS, EXCEPT IN MY
COMPANY.

I WILL NOT
LOSE YOU TOO,
MY SON.

FOR A TIME, AS
YOU KNOW, I WAS
FORCED TO
USE YOUR
BLOOD --

-- BUT THE PROCESS
WAS WEAKENING YOU,
AND EVENTUALLY
YOU WOULD HAVE
DIED.

AND WHY SHOULD THE
LOYAL SON PERISH --
WHEN THE BLOOD OF
THE TREACHEROUS SON
WILL SUFFICE?

THAT IS WHY I
SACRIFICED THE
CONVENIENT TAKING
OF YOUR BLOOD.

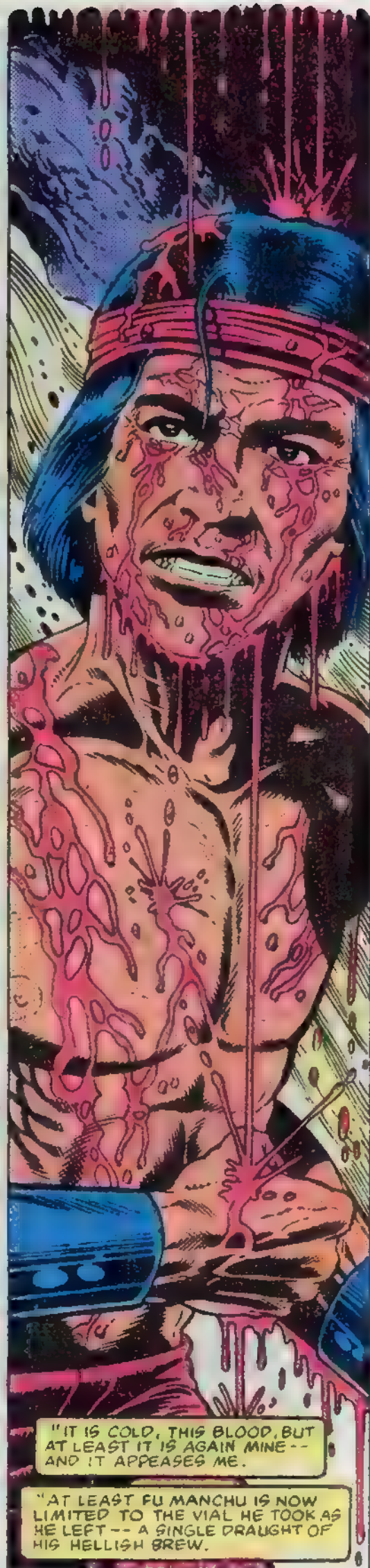
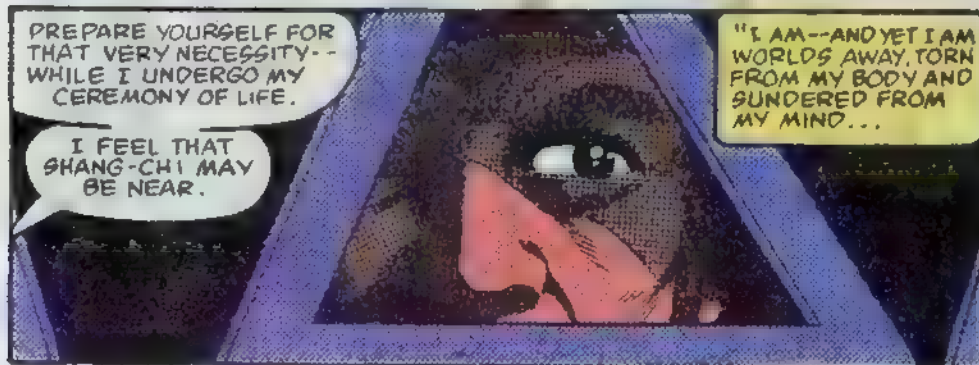
I UNDERSTAND
AND APPRECIATE THIS
GREAT SACRIFICE,
CELESTIAL
FATHER...

... AND THAT IS
WHY I SHALL EVER
LOVE, HONOR, AND
SERVE YOU IN ANY
WAY POSSIBLE OR
IMPOSSIBLE...



I MUST PARTAKE
OF THE CEREMONY
SOON, FOR ALREADY
MY FLESH TINGLES
WITH THE ONSET
OF AGING...

SHOULD I PERMIT
IT TO PROGRESS
I COULD WELL AGE
UNTO DEATH WITHIN
A MATTER OF
HOURS.



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It's longer
lasting!!!

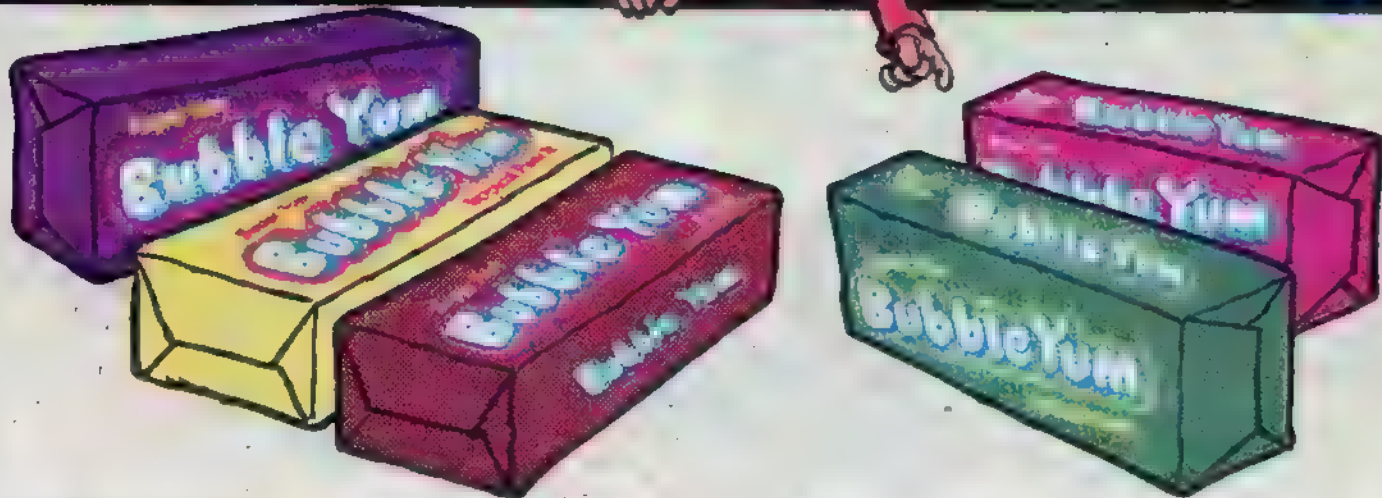
super yum
Bubble Yum
Bubble Gum

Wow!
It's the best
tasting ever!!!

It's smoother
and blows great
bubbles!!!

It's more
delicious!!!

Hey, look at
all the great
tasting flavors!!!



LIMEHOUSE, LONDON WHERE MIA LESSING, THE "DARK ANGEL" OF BRITISH INTELLIGENCE, AND LEIKO WU OF FREELANCE RESTORATIONS, SEARCH FOR NAYLAND SMITH...

WE'VE BEEN AT THIS FOR ALMOST TWENTY HOURS, LEIKO-- ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU'RE NOT GETTING TIRED?

NEVER, MIA--NOT WHILE SMITH IS STILL MISSING.

GOOD. I WOULD LIKE NOT TO STOP EITHER... AT LEAST NOT UNTIL WE FIND SOMETHING WHICH--

QUIET, MIA-- I HEAR SOMETHING UP AHEAD--FROM THE MOUTH OF THAT ALLEY...

YES. I HEAR IT TOO. WE'LL TAKE IT TOGETHER--LET'S GO!

WHAT THE--? IT'S ONLY A CAT!

THEN ANOTHER FALSE ALARM FOR US, LEIKO... BUT I WONDER HOW THE OTHERS ARE FARING IN HONAN...?

ESPECIALLY CLIVE, DARK ANGEL? YOU REALLY LOVE HIM, DON'T YOU?

YES... I DO... AS YOU ONCE DID, DIDN'T YOU?

YES, WELL...

LET'S FIND NAYLAND SMITH.

YOU JUST SAID THE MAGIC WORDS... PARTNER.

"CONTROL IS ELUSIVE...
MAINTAINING IT A CONSTANT
EFFORT."

"YET THE FALSE TRANQUILITY OF
THESE CHAMBERS GROWS SEDUC-
TIVE, RECALLED FROM A TIME
WHEN SERENITY HERE SEEMED
TRUE."

"I HAVE REMEMBERED
AND EVADED THE LAST
THREE TRAPS."

"AND NOW I ENTER AN AREA OF
THE SANCTUARY WHICH, IN MY YOUTH,
WAS ALWAYS FORBIDDEN TO ME."

"IT IS A MIRROR
IMAGE OF MY OWN
FORMER QUARTERS..."

"AND HERE--A VIRTUAL
DUPLICATE OF MY OLD
CHAMBER! IT STUNS ME
WITH FRESH WONDER, OLD
MEMORIES..."

"AND IT IS STILL DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE
THAT A... A TWIN OF MYSELF WAS LIVING
HERE AT THE SAME TIME MY SPIRIT
BLOSSOMED."

"AN IDENTICAL
COPY OF MYSELF..."

"... YIN TO MY YANG,
BUT UNKNOWN AND
UNSUSPECTED."

"EVEN THE CHEST IS
THE SAME AS MINE..."

"EVEN THE
CLOTHING
INSIDE..."

"MY
GI,
AND--"

"I HAVE BEEN LOST-- DEAF TO
WHISPERING SHIFTS OF AIR..."

"PAIN!"

"BUT WHO--?"



I AM HERE, SHANG-CHI, TO SETTLE THE FORMER SCORE-- BY STARTING THE GAME ANEW...



"DEATH-DEALER!"



"HE LUNGES, HIS TRIPLE BLADES GLASHING THE GLOOM--"



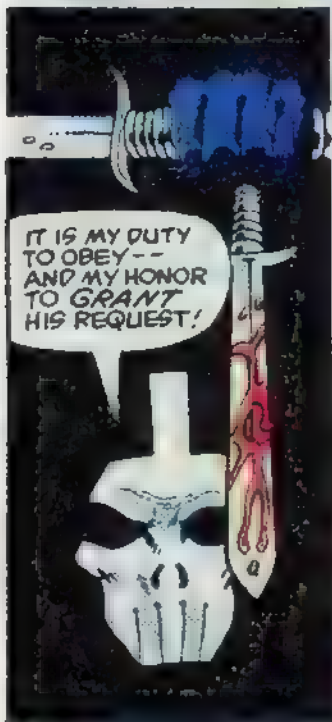
"--DRIVING ME BACK TOWARD THE HEAT OF THE INCENSE BRAZIER..."



YOUR BLOOD IS REQUESTED, SHANG-CHI...



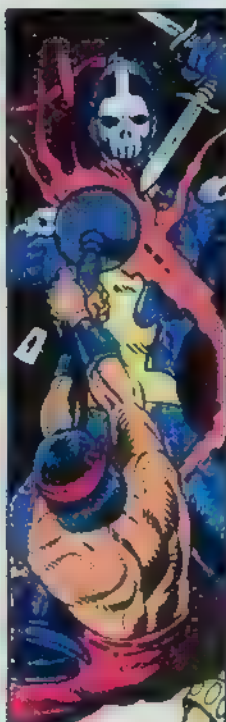
...REQUESTED BY MY MASTER FU MANCHU!



IT IS MY DUTY TO OBEY-- AND MY HONOR TO GRANT HIS REQUEST!



"NO!"



"THE COSTUME IGNITES SWIFTLY, HIS DEATH-MASK BURNING AWAY--"



"--TO REVEAL A LIVING MASK OF SHEER PAIN."



"HE SCREAMS ONCE... FOLLOWS IT WITH A BUBBLING MOAN..."

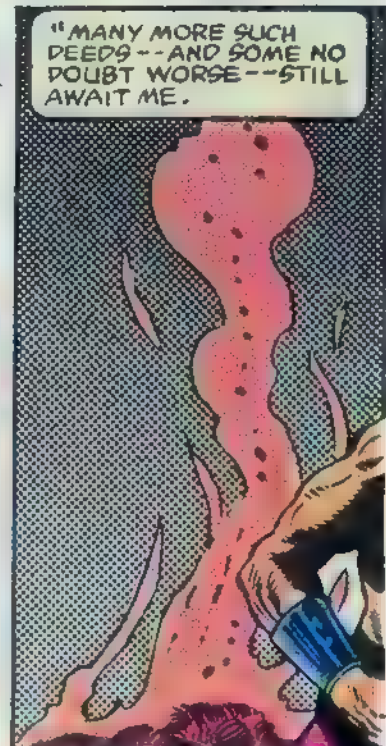


"... THEN SPASMS INTO THE WHINING FLAMES."

"THE SOUND IS AWFUL."



"I HAVE COMPLETED THE FIRST OF MY DEEDS TO BE DONE IN DARKNESS. I HAVE DEALT DEATH TO THE DEATH-DEALER. HE, WHO IN THE RECENT PAST, HAS ATTEMPTED TO DEAL IT TO ME."



"MANY MORE SUCH DEEDS--AND SOME NO DOUBT WORSE--STILL AWAIT ME."



"I PASS AGAIN INTO A FAMILIAR AREA, AND IT IS AS IF I HAVE NEVER LEFT THIS VAST RETREAT."

"EACH AND EVERY STONE IS RECALLED VIVIDLY, OLD FRIENDS WHOSE TREACHERY IS NOW EXPOSED."

"JUST AHEAD LIES A CHAMBER WHICH, ACCORDING TO MY FATHER, WAS DEVOTED TO SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT..."

"... BUT IT IS A CHAMBER WHICH I NOW SUSPECT HAS HOSTED TORTURE ALL ALONG."



"YES."

FAH LO SUEE!

SH-SHANG-CHI...? IS IT YOU, MY BROTHER...?

YOU... YOU MUST... FREE ME...



SO WEAK... MY BLOOD... HE... HE HAS BEEN DRAINING MY... BLOOD...

I KNOW, OUR BLOOD IS THE SAME, FAH LO SUEE, YOURS AND MINE-- THE KEY TO HIS LIFE.

"BUT TO OUR LIVES AS WELL, AND SO MUST IT ALWAYS REMAIN LOCKED WITHIN US."



MY GUN... HE LOCKED IT IN THAT BOX OVER THERE...

... TO TANTALIZE ME... TAUNT ME WITH MY HELPLESSNESS...

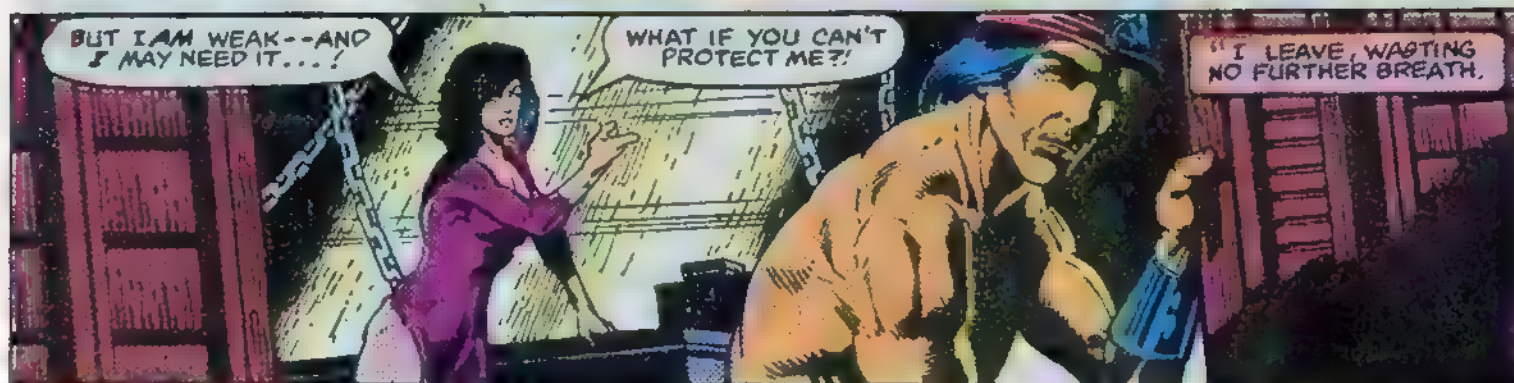
O-OPEN IT, SHANG-CHI...



NO.

RELiance ON GUNS IS A WEAKNESS.

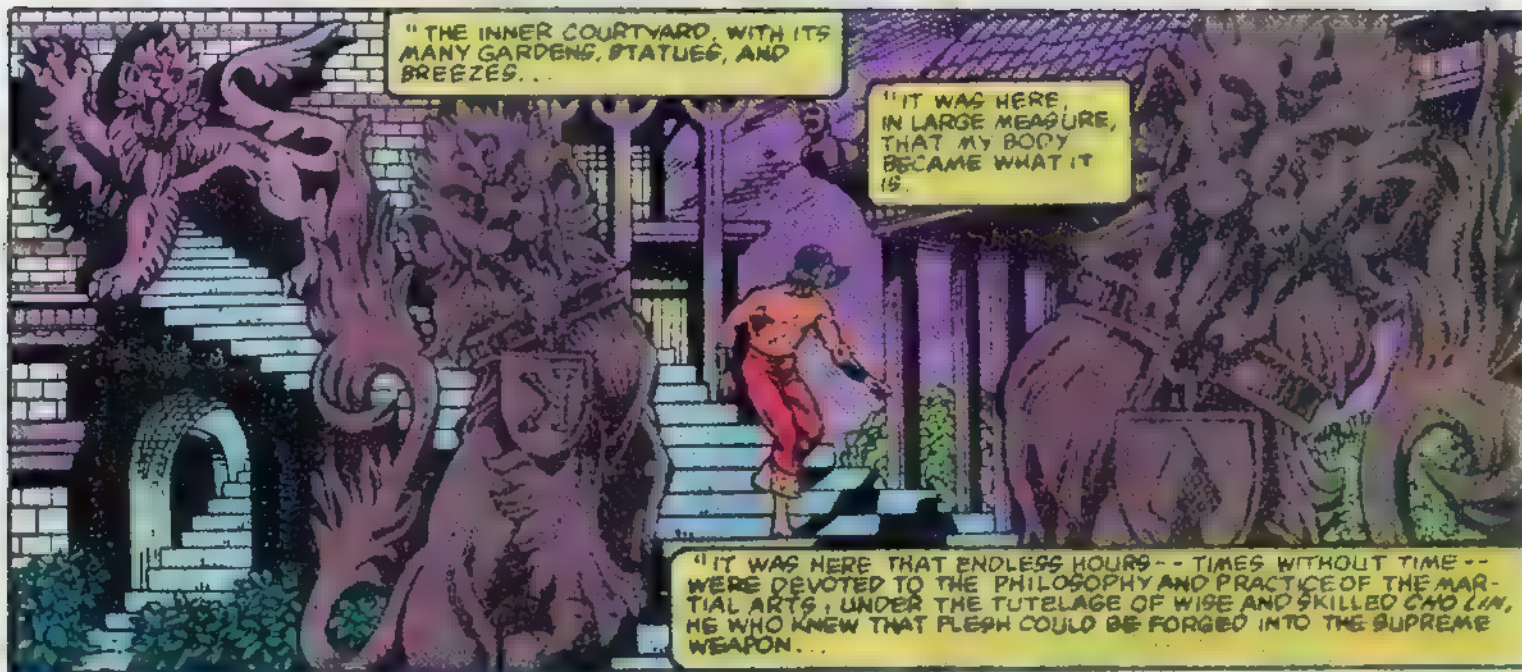
I HAVE NO NEED FOR IT.



BUT I AM WEAK--AND I MAY NEED IT...!

WHAT IF YOU CAN'T PROTECT ME?!

"I LEAVE, WASTING NO FURTHER BREATH."



"THE INNER COURTYARD, WITH ITS MANY GARDENS, STATUES, AND BREEZES..."

"IT WAS HERE, IN LARGE MEASURE, THAT MY BODY BECAME WHAT IT IS."

"IT WAS HERE THAT ENDLESS HOURS--TIMES WITHOUT TIME--WERE DEVOTED TO THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF WISE AND SKILLED CHO LIN, HE WHO KNEW THAT FLESH COULD BE FORGED INTO THE SUPREME WEAPON..."



MY GUN...!



WELCOME HOME, SHANG-CHI.

"HIM!"

CHO LIN-- MY TEACHER! YOU TOO? BUT... WHY--?



BECAUSE HE IS FU MANCHU AND HE DREAMS OF A RETURN TO GLORY.



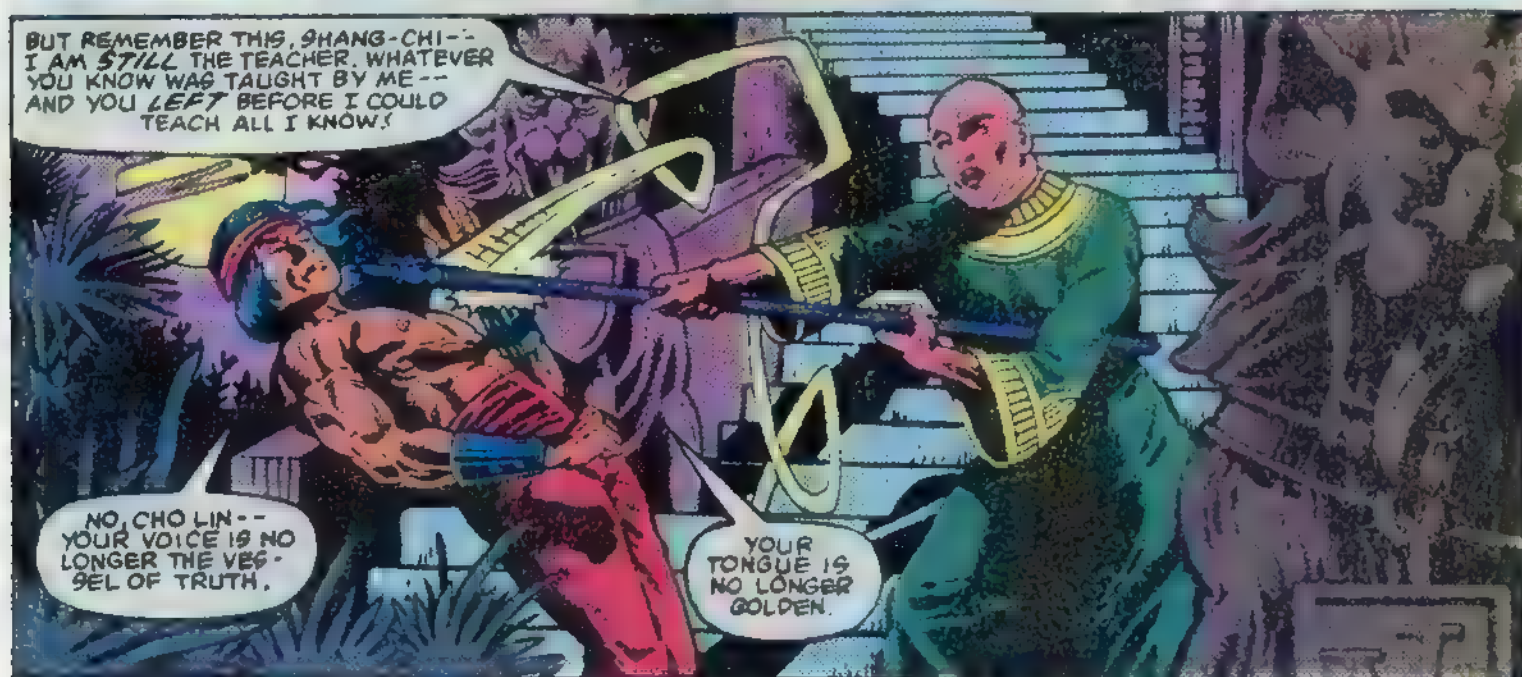
BECAUSE HE GAVE ME A PLACE IN A WORLD WHICH HAD NO PLACE FOR SUCH AS ME

BECAUSE HE PERMITTED ME TO TRAIN HIS SON-- HIS TWO SONS-- AND MAKE OF THEM PERHAPS THE BEST FLESH THIS WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.



MUST HAVE MY GUN!

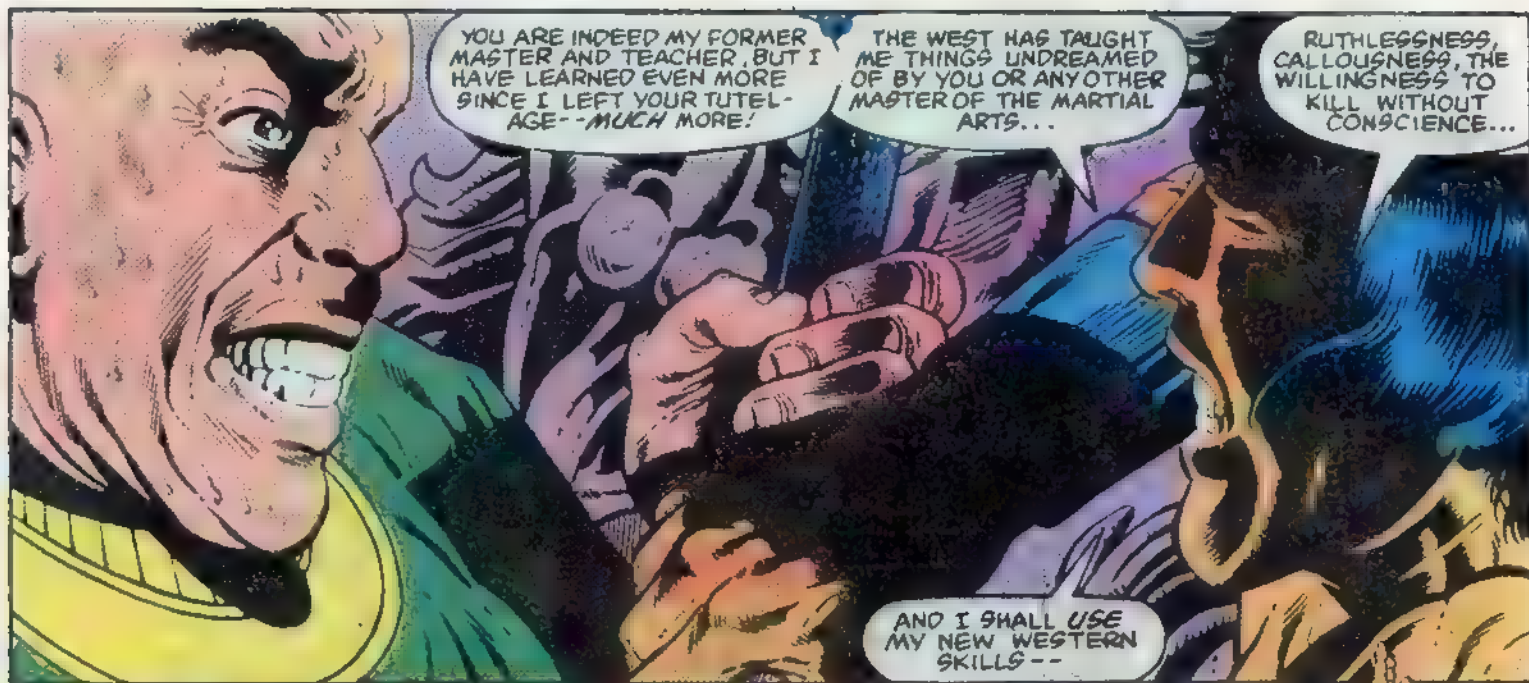
SHAKT



BUT REMEMBER THIS, SHANG-CHI-- I AM STILL THE TEACHER. WHATEVER YOU KNOW WAS TAUGHT BY ME-- AND YOU LEFT BEFORE I COULD TEACH ALL I KNOW!

NO CHO LIN-- YOUR VOICE IS NO LONGER THE VESSEL OF TRUTH.

YOUR TONGUE IS NO LONGER GOLDEN.



YOU ARE INDEED MY FORMER MASTER AND TEACHER, BUT I HAVE LEARNED EVEN MORE SINCE I LEFT YOUR TUTELAGE--MUCH MORE!

THE WEST HAS TAUGHT ME THINGS UNDREAMED OF BY YOU OR ANY OTHER MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS...

RUTHLESSNESS, CALLOUSNESS, THE WILLINGNESS TO KILL WITHOUT CONSCIENCE...

AND I SHALL USE MY NEW WESTERN SKILLS--



-- TO WREST AWAY YOUR FORMER POWER OVER ME--

STILL... WEAK...



--AND TO BREAK IT IN TWAIN! SO MUCH FOR THE TEACHER'S SUPERIORITY OVER THE PUPIL--SO MUCH FOR THE PAST BETWEEN US!



BRAM

WHAT?!



YES, SHANG-CHI, SO MUCH FOR THE PAST BETWEEN US... BUT IT WAS A PAST CUT SHORT WHILE YOUR BROTHER HAS REMAINED HERE ALL THIS TIME...

...AND YOUR FATHER... WILL YET... TRIUMPH...

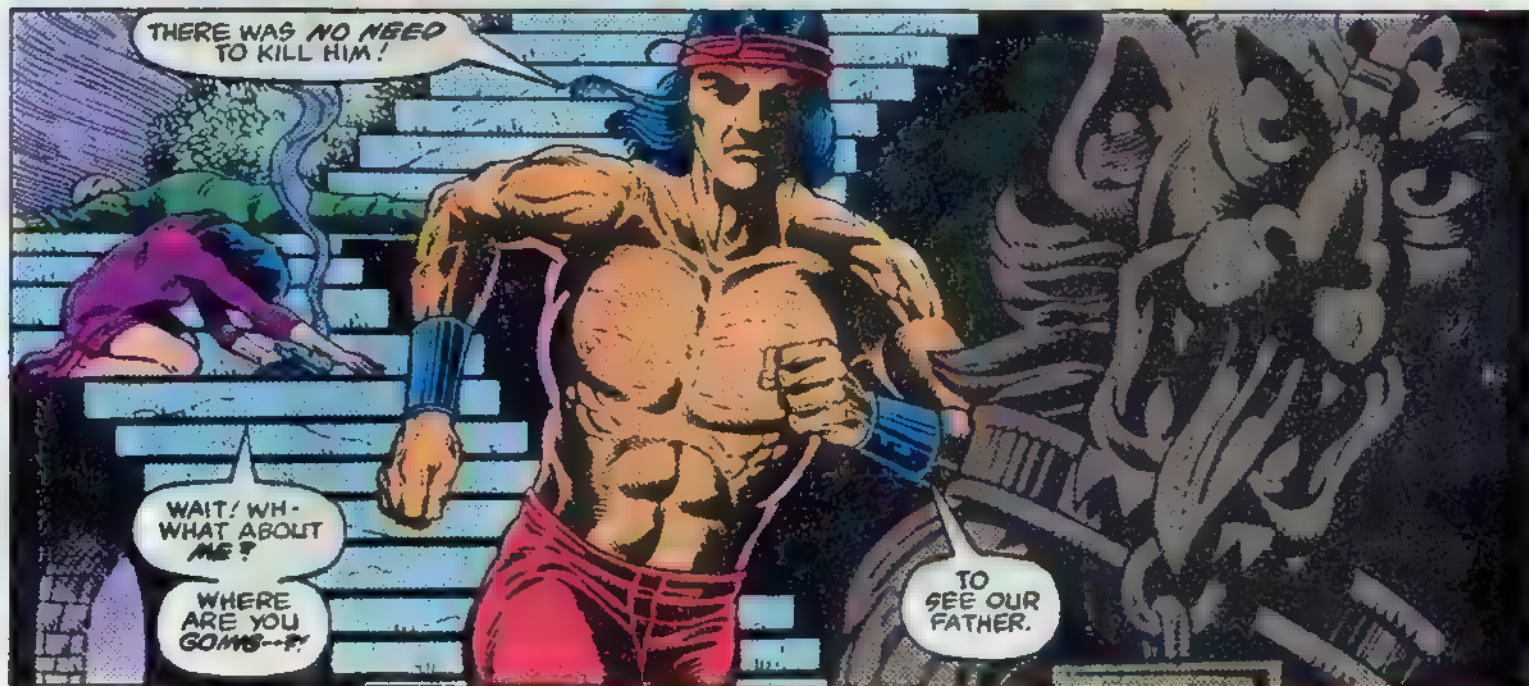
"HE DIES."



"I EX- PLODE."

SHWAK

YOU FOOL!



THERE WAS NO NEED TO KILL HIM!

WAIT! WH- WHAT ABOUT ME?

WHERE ARE YOU GOING--?

TO SEE OUR FATHER.

YOU HAVE SERVED ME FAITHFULLY THROUGH MANY CEREMONIES OF LIFE, DUCHARME, AND IT SHALL BE YOUR REWARD AND PRIVILEGE TO DO SO FOREVER.

HAVE YOU OPENED THE DUCTS-- TO RELEASE THE VIPERS INTO THE BATH?

AS YOU DESIRED, CELESTIAL MASTER, AND HERE IS THE ELIXIR VITAE, BLENDED WITH BLOOD OF YOUR BLOOD.

EXCELLENT DUCHARME--AND NOW I WOULD BE ALONE WITH MY FAITHFUL ONES... AND WITH MY THOUGHTS.

FLOW SOFTLY, FLOW SMOOTHLY, MY FAITHFUL, UNTIL YOUR BODIES BECOME A CARESS-- CONFORM YOUR COILS TO THE CONTOURS OF MY FLESH...

... AND JOIN WITH ME IN THE THREE-CORNERED SIGHT, WHERE DWELL VISIONS OF GREATNESS, AND ILLUMINATION, AND IMMORTALITY

BEAR WITNESS TO THE MIRACLE SOON TO PASS...

MY SON, BUT I TOLD YOU TO MEDITATE-- AND TO PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETING WITH SHANG-CHI.



WHEN, WITH BUT A SIP OF THE ELIXIR, I STAVE OFF THE YEARS AND DEAL DEFEAT TO THE BANE OF ALL FLESH, THE VERY PROCESS OF AGING AND--



"I STRIP OFF THE DARKER GI..."



MY FALSE BROTHER CONTINUES TO MEDITATE, FU MANCHU-- BUT YOU SHALL NEVER DRINK OF MY BLOOD AGAIN.

"... AND THE CANDLE-WAX SCAR PEELS EASILY.

THERE IS OTHER BLOOD-- IN MY LABORATORY.



NO-- I DESTROYED IT ALL.

THEN THERE IS STILL MORE BLOOD-- IN YOUR VEINS AND YOUR HEART-- AND YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE THIS FORTRESS WITHOUT SPILLING IT-- EVERY LAST DROP OF--



I HAVE, FATHER, AND
I WILL AGAIN... BUT
RIGHT NOW, I WISH
ONLY TO WATCH YOU.



VERY WELL, MY SON.
THEN WATCH WELL AND
MARK THE SIGHT WITH
MORE THAN YOUR EYES.



"NOW!"



"THE WATER AROUND
MY FATHER BECOMES."



AND
NOW,
YOU,
FATHER.



FIRST YOU,
DUCHARME! FIRST THE
WITCH!

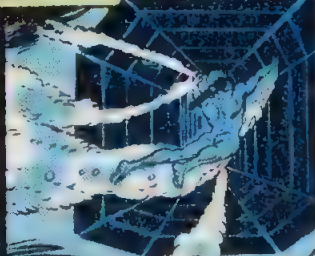


BUT HE MOVES
SWIFTLY/FLOWING
UNDER THE WATER
LIKE ONE OF HIS
SERPENTS...



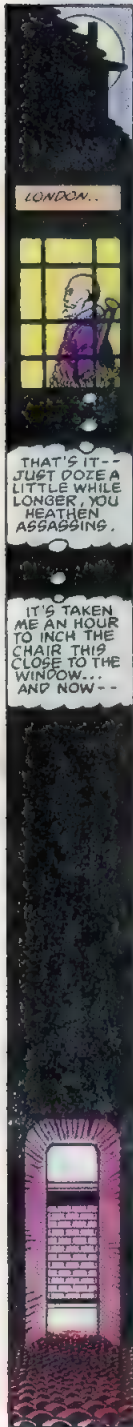
"... AND USING
THE SERPENT'S
DUCT, TOO, FOR
HIS ESCAPE--
EVEN AS
SIZZLING BUL-
LETS SETTLE
ON THE BOTTOM
OF THE EMPTY
POOL."

AGAIN YOU
ARE A FOOL, FAH
LO SUEE/RESTON AND
TARR WILL SOON EN-
TER THE FORTRESS--
WAIT FOR THEM!



"AND FOR THE DARK DEBO HAS SLIPPED
AWAY! I CAN ONLY PURSUE IT."





LONDON...

THAT'S IT--
JUST DOZE A
LITTLE WHILE
LONGER, YOU
HEATHEN
ASSASSINING.

IT'S TAKEN
ME AN HOUR
TO INCH THE
CHAIR THIS
CLOSE TO THE
WINDOW...
AND NOW--



BLASH

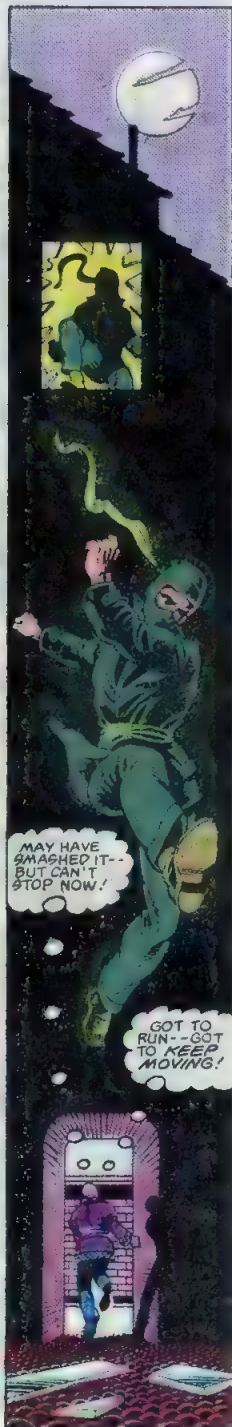
-- IT'S ALL OR
NOTHING!



NO! GOT TO
TWIST AROUND--
LAND ON THE
CHAIR!



AGH-H! MY
ANKLE!



MAY HAVE
SMASHED IT--
BUT CAN'T
STOP NOW!

GOT TO
RUN-- GOT
TO KEEP
MOVING!

THE TIME IS NOW, MY SON--
THE TIME FOR THAT WHICH
YOUR ENTIRE LIFE HAS
BEEN A TRAINING. MY
FALSE SON SHANG-CHI,
FROM WHOSE FLESH I
SHAPED YOU, HAS CONTRIVED
MY END.



THE BLOOD FOR
THE ELIXIR IS GONE--
ALL OF IT DESTROYED.
I NEED MORE BLOOD.
BUT I CANNOT TAKE IT
FROM FAH LO SUEE,
FOR SHE HAS BEEN
FREED, ALSO BY
SHANG-CHI.



YOU MUST FIND
AND SLAY THEM BOTH
RENDERING UNTO ME
THEIR BLOOD.

THIS I WILL
DO, CELESTIAL
FU MANCHU, FOR
YOU ARE MY
FATHER, AND
WITHOUT YOU, I
WOULD BE
NOTHING.

NOW GO, MY
SON--ALREADY
THE PROCESS OF
ACCELERATED
AGING BEGINS TO
SEIZE MY FLESH,
AND THERE IS
LITTLE TIME BE-
FORE I SUCCUMB
TO THE DEATH
WHICH IMPATIENT-
LY AWAITS ME.

GO AND LAY
YOUR TRAP--
SECURE FOR
ME THE BLOOD
OF MY BLOOD--
THE BLOOD OF
YOUR FALSE
BROTHER,
SHANG-CHI!



EXCELLENT.

"A GLOWING
MEMORY OF THE
PAST -- DOUSED
BY THE GLOOM OF
THE PRESENT."



"I DESCEND, AND MY HEART
FEELS A FIERCE PANG OF LOSS--
OF THE SERENITY I ONCE KNEW
HERE, THE SPIRIT OF PEACE AND
OF BELONGING EFFORTLESSLY
TO THE GREATER FORCE OF THE
VAST WORLD BEING..."

"... THE LOST ART OF BEING
ONE WITH EVERY OTHER PULSE
AND BREATH OF LIFE IN EXIST-
ENCE -- THE SWEET STILL
ESSENCE OF THE TAO."



"WHEN I WAS A CHILD I
SAT HERE SURROUNDED BY
THE WARM RADIANCE OF
CANDLES ALIVE AND SHIM-
MERING BY THE HUNDREDS..."

"NOW ONLY A SINGLE CANDLE BRAVES
THE GLOOM BY BURNING... MOCKING
ME WITH ITS FEEBLE GLOW OF WANING
HOPE."

"I AM A CHILD NO MORE."

"AND THEY KNOW IT, THE LONG THIN WEAVING THINGS SLIDING FROM SHADOWS..."

"...THE SILENT SERVANTS AND FAITHFUL FRIENDS OF MY FATHER..."

"...THE SERPENTS FROM FU MANCHU'S BATH OF ETERNAL LIFE!"

"THEY ATTACK WITH ALIEN SPEED, WITH ZEAL AND PURPOSE, AS IF GUIDED BY SOME EXTERNAL INTELLIGENCE--AND PERHAPS THEY ARE."

"AFTER A LIFE-TIME UNDER HIS SHADOW, I WOULD NOW PUT NOTHING PAST MY FATHER'S REACH."

"AS FOR ME, PERHAPS MY REACH HAS SHORTENED--AT ONE TIME I MIGHT HAVE SOOTHED THESE VIPERS WITH THE VERY SERENITY OF MY OWN BEING..."

"BUT THIS NIGHT WAS HARDLY DESTINED FOR SERENITY--IT WAS MADE FOR RAGE. I REACH DOWN-- RIP ONE FROM MY LEG..."

"THIS ONE I USE AS A WHIP ON THE OTHERS--UNTIL THEY SO OVERWHELM ME IN CONSTRICTING COILS THAT TO CONTINUE FLAILING AT THEM WOULD ONLY SERVE TO SCOURGE MYSELF."

"AND NOW, BOUND HELPLESS, I AM FORCED TO HEAR A NEW SOUND--CUTTING THROUGH THE RASPING HISS..."

"IT IS A CLICKING, CHITTERING NOISE WHICH SHOULD BE SMALL AND SOFT..."

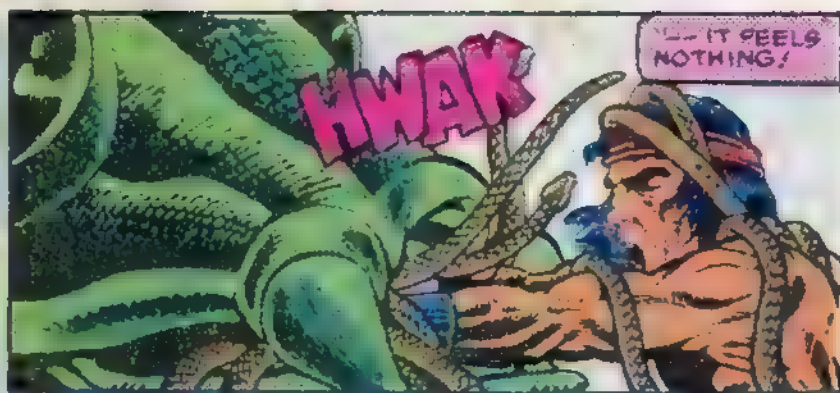
"...BUT WHICH IS NOT."



"A PRAYING MANTIS-- MADE MAMMOTH BY THE INSANITY OF MY FATHER'S BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS!"

"ITS MOVEMENTS ARE A TAUNTING PARODY OF KUNG FU-- ITS STRENGTH UNREAL, MAGNIFIED A THOUSANDFOLD! IT LIFTS ME, ITS ENERGY UNTAPPED, AND--"

CH-CHREE



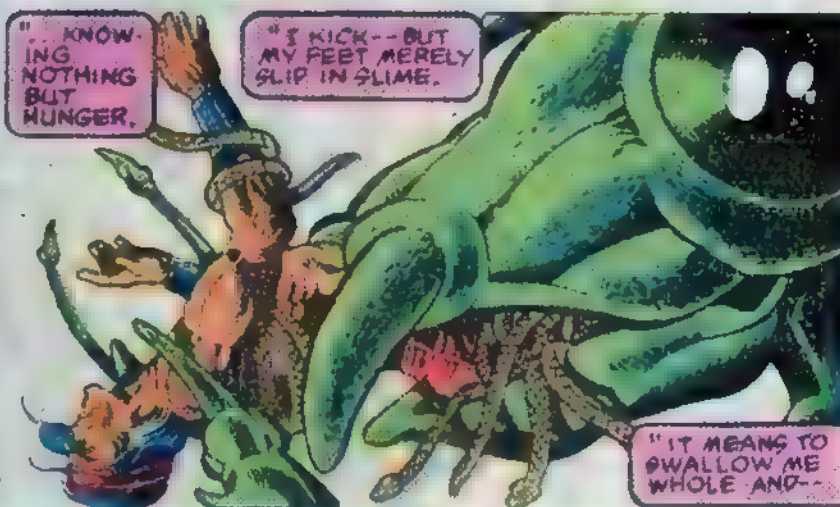
HWAK

"-- IT FEELS NOTHING!"



"THUS ENLARGED, ITS SHELL IS FAR TOO HARD TO DENT OR PIERCE."

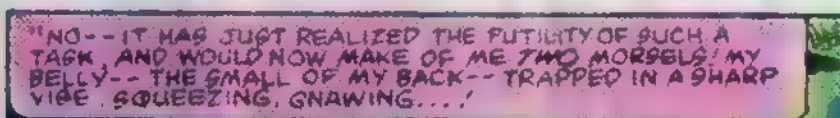
"BUT ITS BRAIN REMAINS PRIMITIVE, WHATEVER ITS SIZE..."



"KNOWING NOTHING BUT HUNGER."

"I KICK-- BUT MY FEET MERELY SLIP IN SLIME."

"IT MEANS TO SWALLOW ME WHOLE AND--"



"NO-- IT HAS JUST REALIZED THE FUTILITY OF SUCH A TASK, AND WOULD NOW MAKE OF ME TWO MORSELS! MY BELLY-- THE SMALL OF MY BACK-- TRAPPED IN A SHARP VICE, SQUEEZING, GNAWING..."



"I HAVE ENTERED A HELL I CANNOT ESCAPE ALONE."

"I MUST HAVE AID..."

"I STRETCH--GRASP--
PULL--YANK...

"YES! I'M FREE!
PERHAPS, THEN, MY
REACH HAS *NOT*
BEEN SHORTENED...

"NOW, MANTIS! IN THE
FACE OF FALLING STONE,
NOW SHALL WE SEE HOW
YOU PREY...

"IN THE FACE OF A DESCEND-
ING GOD, NOW SHALL WE SEE
HOW YOU *PRAY*!

"THE MANTIS IS CRUSHED.
THE SNAKES HAVE FLED.

"I MOVE ON.





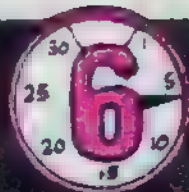




"I ENTER A CHAMBER
WHERE NOTHING CAN
BE SEEN."

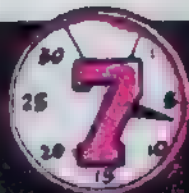


"A FITTING PLACE,
PERHAPS, FOR A TERRIBLE
DEED DONE IN DARKNESS..."



"THEN ABRUPT LIGHT--
BLAZING--AND I AM FACING
HIM AT LAST, FLESH OF MY--"

"NO--AS THERE
IS NONE ON MINE,
THERE IS NO SCAR
ON THE OTHER
CHEEK."



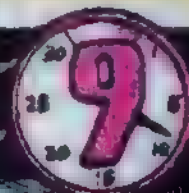
"IT IS
MERELY MY
REFLECTION..."

"A MIRROR--AND NOT
THE ULTIMATE ENEMY I
FIRST THOUGHT..."



"FOR AS I HAVE KNOWN
ALL ALONG, I FACE HIM
WHO IS THE FALLEN AND
ULTIMATE ENEMY IN
THIS LONG NIGHT OF
DARK--"

BLASH



"TIME FREEZES!"

"I HAVE LAID MY
TRAPS WELL, BROTHER
SHANG-CHI."



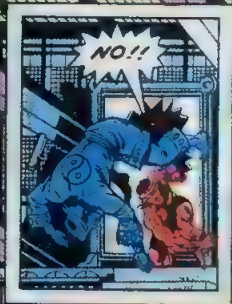
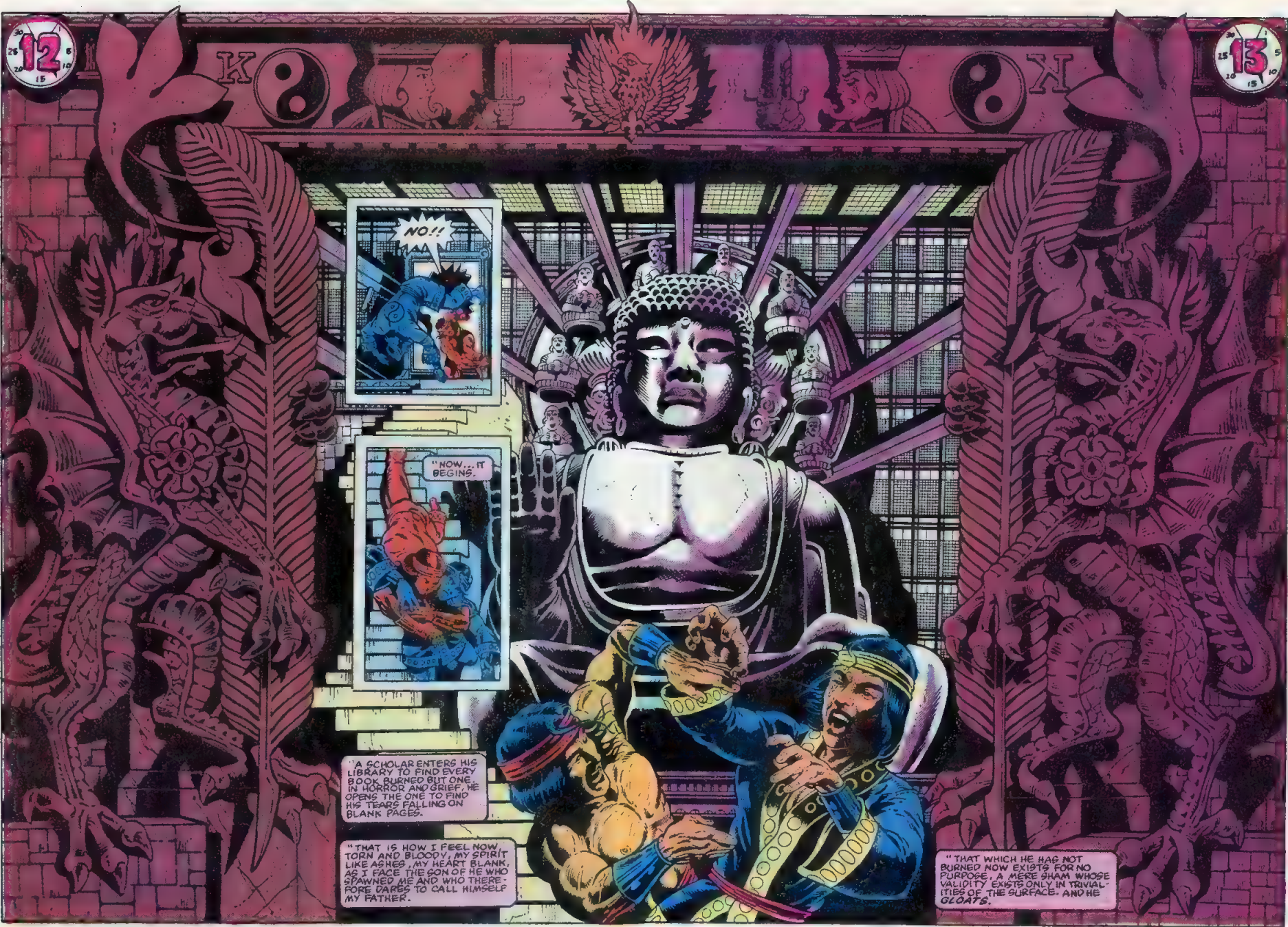
"HE IS DEATH!"

"OUR FIRST MEETING... AND
YET MY ENTIRE PURPOSE IN
LIFE IS ABOUT TO BE
CONSUMMATED IN IT..."

"...BY KILLING
YOU."



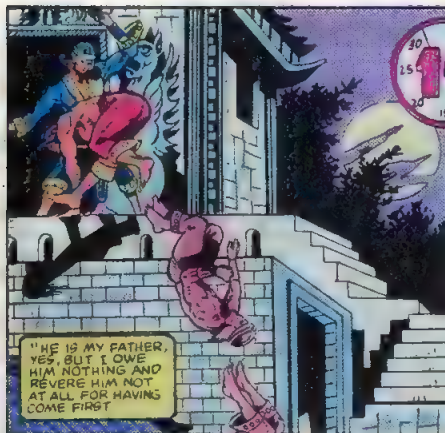
"HE IS ME!"



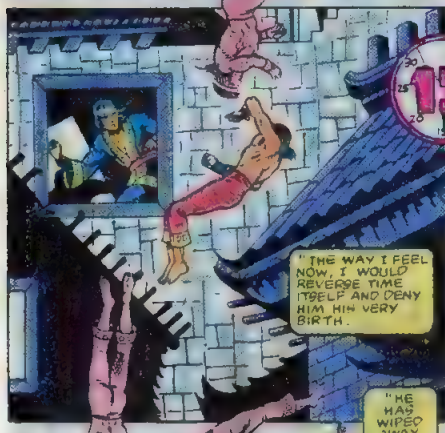
"A SCHOLAR ENTERS HIS LIBRARY TO FIND EVERY BOOK BURNED BUT ONE. IN HORROR AND GRIEF, HE OPENS THE ONE TO FIND HIS TEARS FALLING ON BLANK PAGES."

"THAT IS HOW I FEEL NOW. TORN AND BLOODY, MY SPIRIT LIKE ASHES, MY HEART BLANK, AS I FACE THE SON OF HE WHO SPAWNED ME AND WHO THEREFORE DARES TO CALL HIMSELF MY FATHER."

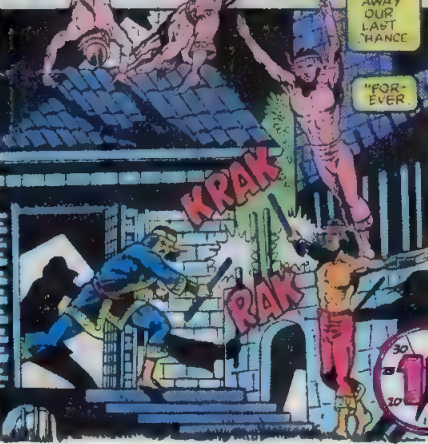
"THAT WHICH HE HAS NOT BURNED NOW EXISTS FOR NO PURPOSE, A MERE SHAM WHOSE VALIDITY EXISTS ONLY IN TRIVALTIES OF THE SURFACE. AND HE GOATS."



"HE IS MY FATHER, YES, BUT I OWE HIM NOTHING AND REVERE HIM NOT AT ALL FOR HAVING COME FIRST."



"THE WAY I FEEL NOW, I WOULD REVERSE TIME ITSELF AND DENY HIM HIS VERY BIRTH."



KRAK
RAK



"I OPPOSE MYSELF IN SILENCE, AND MYSELF FIGHTS ME SILENTLY."

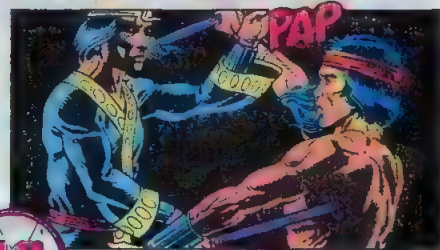
"WORDS... THROUGHOUT ALL THE AGES OF THE EARTH, MAN HAS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COMMUNICATE WITHOUT THEM."

"BUT TONIGHT - THIS VERY NIGHT OF BLOOD AND BURNED BOOKS - THIS NIGHT OF BLANK DAMNATION WHICH SHALL FOREVER LIVE IN A DARK CORNER OF MY MEMORY, LONG OR SHORT AS IT MAY BE..."

"I SHALL DO EVERYTHING WITHIN MY POWER TO BURST THE BARRIER OF WORDS WITH NAKED FURY-- AND TO SPEAK WITH MY FISTS AND FEET, IN THE TONGUES OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING."



WAP



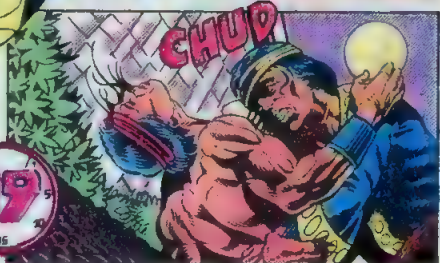
PAP



FRACK



WUMP



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July-82

20

"AND BEFORE I AM DONE
LET THE SILENCE OF WORDS
AND THE SOUNDS OF FURY
CONSPIRE TO COMMUNICATE
NO MISUNDERSTANDING."

NOW, MY BROTHER,
YOU SHALL--

WUMPT

21

"YOU
SHALL
FALL..."

"NO, FLESH OF
MY FLESH..."

YAAAAIEEEEE

"...AND YOU
SHALL BECOME
ONE WITH
YOUR SHADOW."

22

"I CAME HERE STALKING DEATH OR REBIRTH..."

KEESH

NO--!

23

"NOW, FORCED TO SLAY THE BROTHER WHO IS ME, I FIND BOTH."

MY SONNNNN!!

24

BUT HIS BLOOD--IT WILL SUFFICE! IF I CAN DRINK ENOUGH OF IT, I CAN STILL--

HOLD, DEMON!

"MY AGING FATHER CRAWLS LIKE A BABE, WALLOWING IN ETERNAL SIN... AND HE SICKENS ME."

"YES-- WITH ONE FINAL ACT OF WEAKNESS, ONE LAST DARK DEED, MY OTHER SELF WILL SHARE THE DEATH OF MY CLONE... AND I WILL BE READY FOR REBIRTH."

PUT IT DOWN, FU MANCHU! MY BROTHER MUST BE PERMITTED TO PERISH IN PEACE!

PUT IT DOWN--AND JOIN HIM!

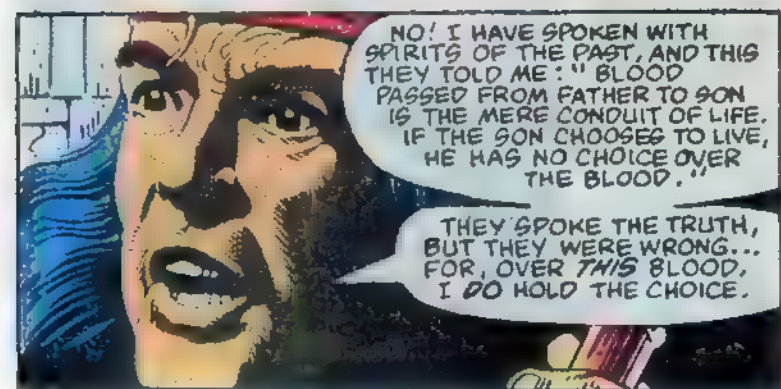
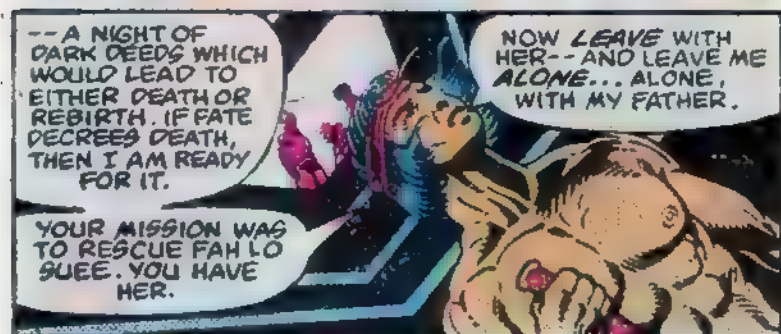
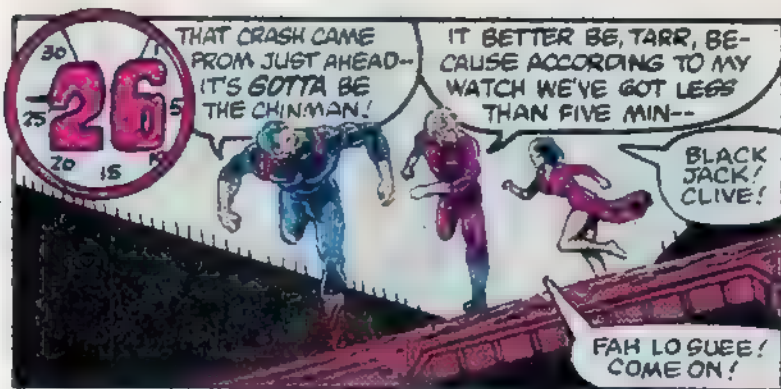
NO! I MUST HAVE THE BLOOD! I'LL DIE WITHOUT IT!

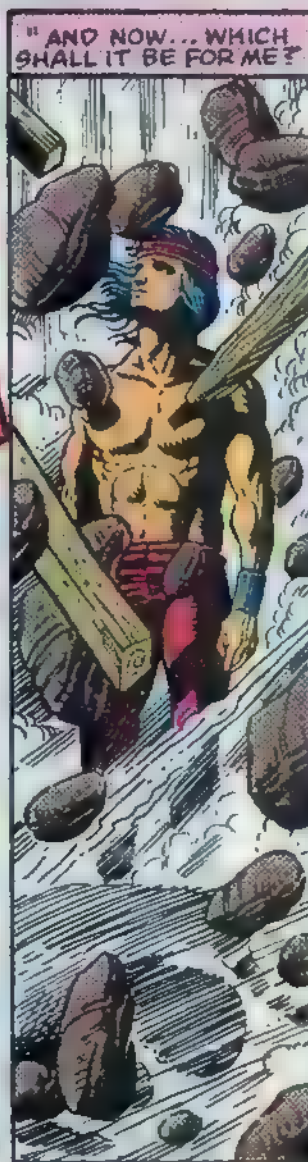
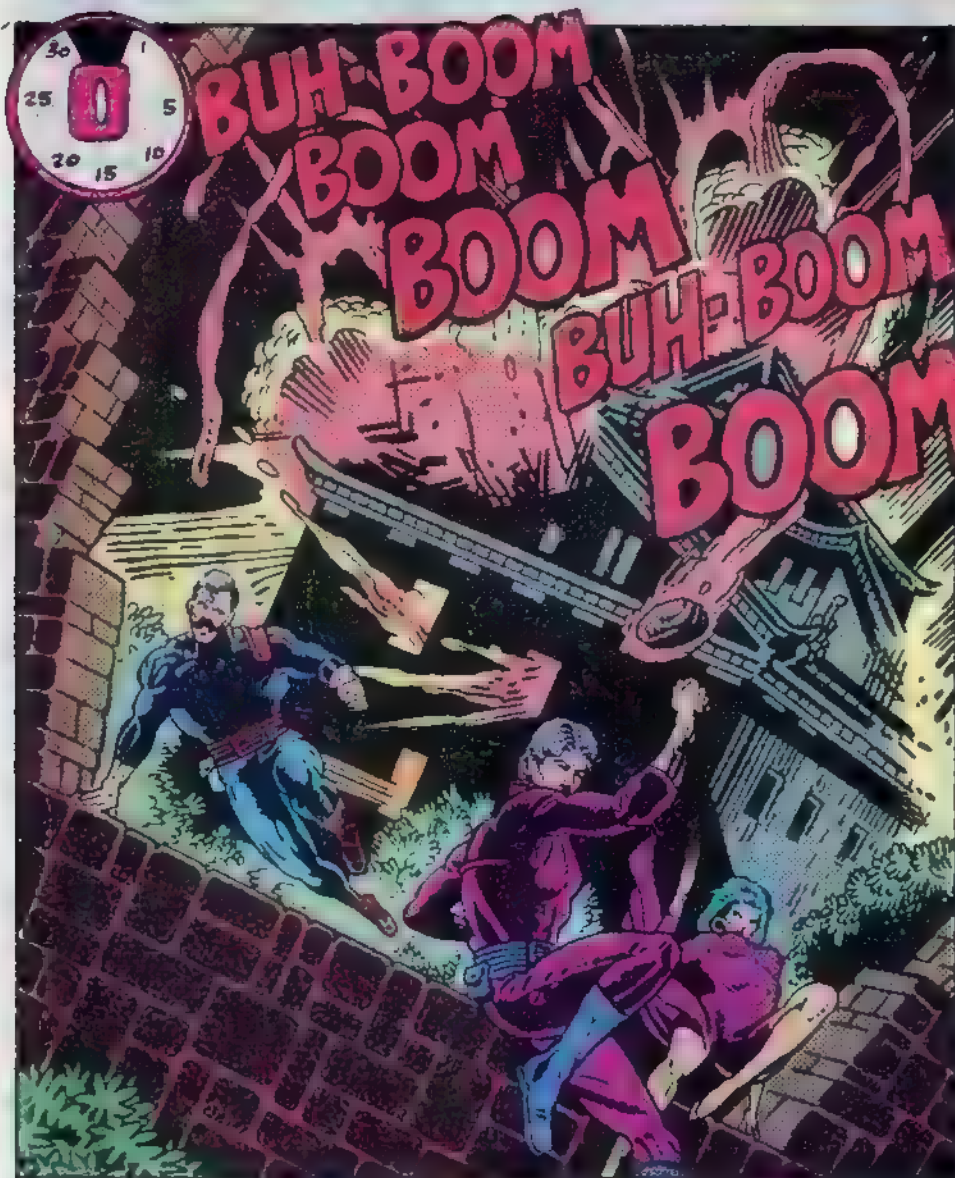
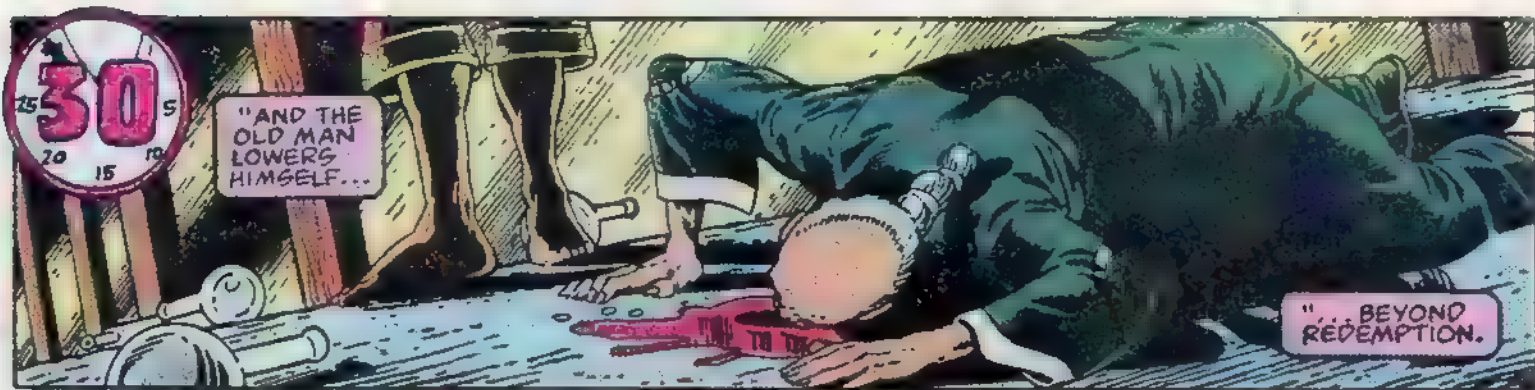
NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE MUST PUT ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES, SHANG-CHI--YOU ARE MY SON! I AM YOUR FATHER!

YES--AND YOU'VE FED ON MY LIFE AND BLOOD AND SPIRIT TOO LONG, FU MANCHU.

EVEN THE DEVIL MUST SOMEDAY DIE!

25







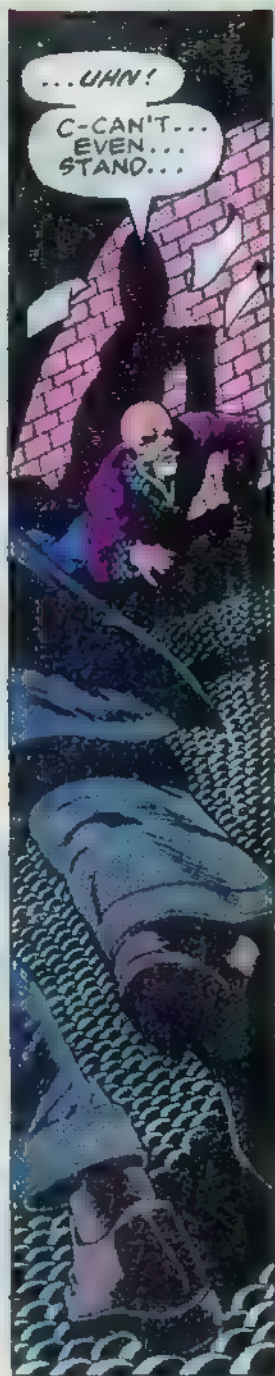
LONDON, WHERE
CRAWLING OVER THE
GREASE AND
SLIME OF BACK-
ALLEY COBBLES...

THERE!
AT LAST WE
HAVE HIM!

COME ON, YOU
BLACKGUARDS--
I'M READY FOR
YOU!



YOU'LL NOT
FIND NAYLAND
SMITH AN EASY
MAN TO....
TO...



...UHN!
C-CAN'T...
EVEN...
STAND...



NO NEED
TO, SIR DENIS--
NOT ANY MORE.

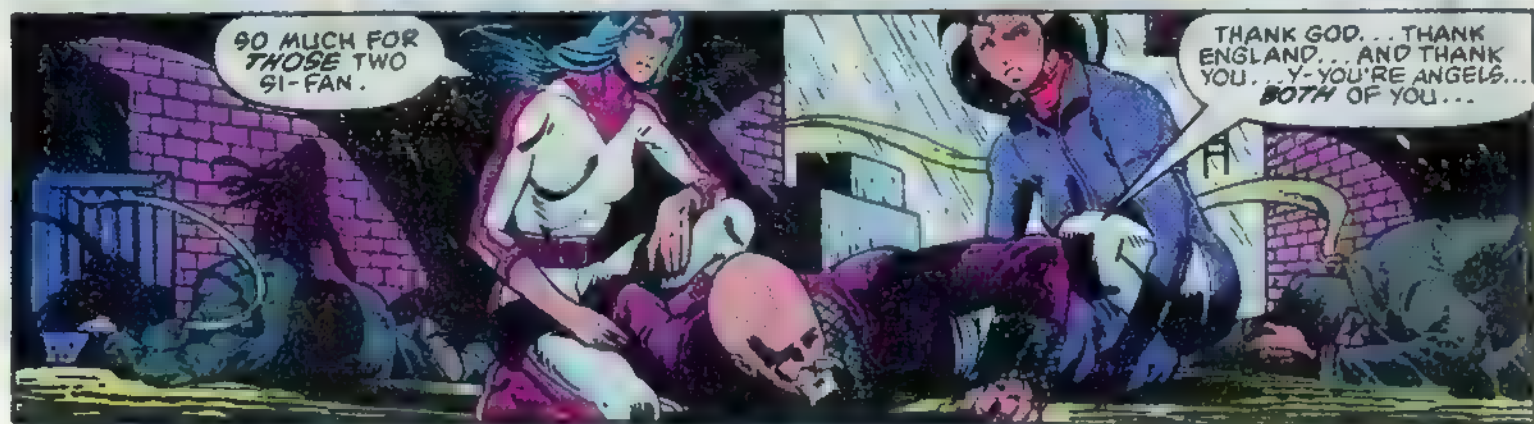
WH-WHO...?



DARK ANGEL...
AND... LEIKO!

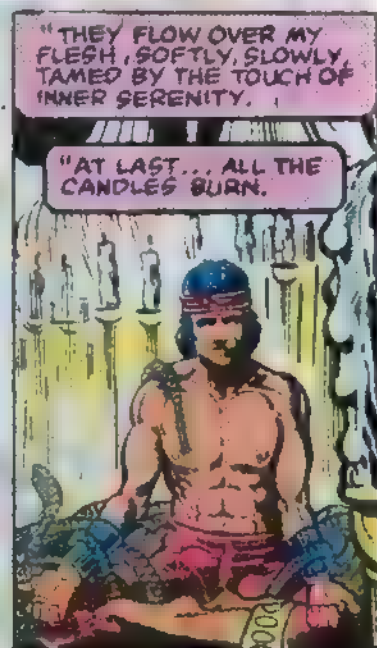
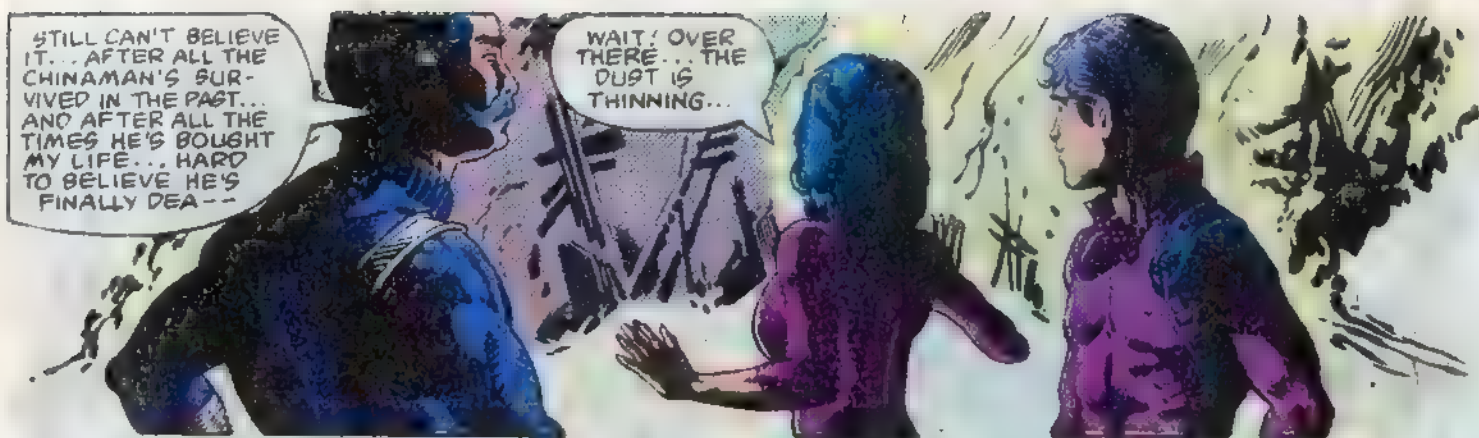


BRAM
BRAM



SO MUCH FOR
THOSE TWO
SI-FAN.

THANK GOD... THANK
ENGLAND... AND THANK
YOU... Y-YOU'RE ANGELS...
BOTH OF YOU...



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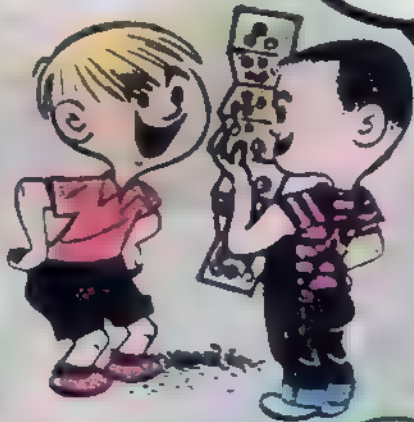
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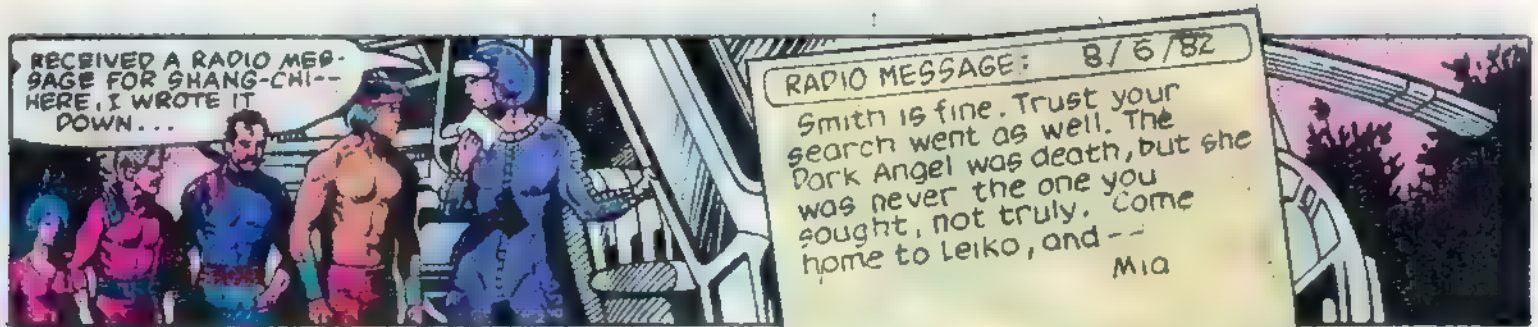
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RADIO MESSAGE: 8/6/82

Smith is fine. Trust your search went as well. The Dark Angel was death, but she was never the one you sought, not truly. Come home to Leiko, and --
Mia



"WITH FU MANCHU GONE, THE MORTGAGES ON STORMHAVEN CASTLE HAVE REVERTED TO THE BANK. THEY ARE NOT CALLING THEM DUE..."

HERE HE COMES WITH MIA IN THE CAR-- GET READY, EVERYONE!

YEAH-- THE HOSPITAL COULDN'T KEEP AN OLD WARHORSE LIKE HIM FOR LONG...



"AFTER THE WAY I FALSELY ACCUSED SMITH OF SEALING A SHAMEFUL DEAL TO RETAIN HIS CASTLE-- A DEAL WHICH WAS, IN FACT, AN ATTEMPT TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF US ALL..."

"... AND AFTER SMITH'S LONE AND VALIANT STRUGGLE TO ESCAPE THE SI-FAN AND AID US AGAINST FU MANCHU..."



"SURELY HE IS THE ONE TRUE HERO AMONG US ALL... AGED BUT NOBLE."

WELCOME HOME, SIR DENIS.

BRAVO!



"WE RISE, AS ONE-- AND CHEER IN THE VOICE OF THOUSANDS."

HEAR!
HEAR!

SPEECH!

SPEECH!



I... I PAREGAY I'M... 9-9PEECHLESS...

I... REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...



SAY NOTHING, SMITH. YOU ARE THE FATHER I NEVER HAD.

I LOVE YOU.

BRYNOCKI'S MARAUDERS!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

STAN LEE'S OLD JOB...

...for better or worse is in my hands. Yes, I'm the Editor-in-Chief of the entire Marvel Comics line, and I love it! Tomorrow the world!

BUT FIRST, THIS IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

Last month I mentioned (barely) something called EPIC COMICS! I promised to tell you more about them this month. And so...

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE EPIC COMICS GROUP!

A lot of our ideas start with a "What if...?" A while back, Archie Goodwin, who's the Editorial Director of EPIC Illustrated Magazine, was sitting in a corner of the Bullpen sulking because his Associate Editor, Mary Jo Duffy, is so brilliant and efficient that he's always winding up with too much spare time. As I was walking by, I noticed Al Milgrom pull up a chair beside Archie to console him. Al, as if you didn't know it, is the genius editor of Marvel Fanfare, a few other terrific series, and the outrageously successful Marvel Graphic Novel, *The Death of Captain Marvel* (it was only the best-selling trade paperback in the country early this year!). Not being one to miss out on a chance to loom over people, I, too, joined Arch in his corner.

My keen mind instantly deduced the cause of the problem. "Arch," I said in a wise, fatherly tone, "what you need is more work!" Staring into the sludge in the bottom of his coffee cup, Arch slowly, quietly muttered, "What if... what if we got together some of the best comics creators available."

"Arch, um... that's our job, man! That's what we always do!" said Al, looking concerned that Goodwin had finally flipped.

"Let him finish, Al!" said I. "He may be onto something, I hope..."

Still staring into his cup, Archie continued, "We'll get the best! The very best! We'll pay them a lot of money so they can take their time..." He looked up, wild-eyed, his voice growing louder. He uttered each word as though it were meant to be carved onto stone tablets. "...AND THEN WE'LL LET THEM DO WHATEVER THEY WANT!" He was shouting.

"Shhh!" I said. "You'll wake Hobson!" Mike Hobson, of course, is our Vice-President of Publishing. He doesn't really take afternoon naps in his office, but I started that rumor hoping to keep the noise level down in the Bullpen.

"Don't you see?" Goodwin hissed. "We'll encourage them to go nuts! All new characters! All new universes! New concepts! A whole new line of comics!"

"How's that different from EPIC Illustrated... or our Graphic Novels, Arch?" I asked softly, trying not to upset him further. Clearly, he was already raving.

"I'm talking about comics! Not short stories! Not limited runs! Not novels or one-shots! I'm talking comics!"

"You mean... you're talking about new, ongoing titles, like *The Amazing Spider-Man*?"

"Yes! New series! But not like Spider-Man! Different! Weird, even! But just as great!" Arch was shouting at me again. Meanwhile a light seemed to go on in Al's eyes.

"Yeah... Yeah!" said Milgrom. "I can see it now! We'll print on good, white paper... in full color!"

"We'll offer great deals to creators!" I added, catching on. "Incentives to make 'em pull out the stops and create! Special contracts, like the Graphic Novels and EPIC Illustrated use—that'll bring the superstar talent running!"

"Wait! What'll we call this new line?" Al belatedly. The entire Bullpen answered him.

"THE EPIC COMICS GROUP!" They were on their feet, cheering.

"Your problem is solved, Arch," I said, smugly.

But he was sitting again, hunched over, staring at the sludge. "Hey, what's wrong?" I asked.

"This is a big project," he muttered without looking up. "I don't know if I have time to fit it in. I may need another assistant..."

THUS, IT BEGAN!

Something like that, anyway. I'm pleased to announce that the first issue of our first EPIC COMICS GROUP series will go on sale in October. It's called *Dreadstar*! It's by Jim Starlin, and it's everything that such a historic premiere issue ought to be. It'll be on sale through stores serviced by our Direct Distributors only. It'll be priced at \$1.50 and a steal at that price. I confidently predict that its value as a collector's item will quickly soar.

If you don't live near a collector's store or another outlet serviced by a Direct Distributor, I'd suggest that you avail yourself of the special subscription offer below. That way you can be sure to get every issue!

STAN LEE'S NEW JOB...

...the one gnomed onto a couple of years back, as V.P. of Creative Affairs, which entails being creative boss, big deal producer and high-cosmic muckamuck for Marvel's film studio, Marvel Productions, is keeping him very busy. Why so, you say? Well, I've managed to talk Stan himself into explaining what's up in Hollywood in a special Stan's Soapbox appearing on this page next month! That's quite a feat, considering how busy he is with the four new shows and... oops! Almost stole his Hollywood Mogulship's lines! I'd better cool it...

...Till Next Month!

Stan Lee

THE HYPE BOX

DAZZLER #21—The story so dramatic, so moving, we had to make this issue double-sized to contain it! Featuring: the shameful secrets of Dazzler's mother, the fate of Carter Gleire, Dazzler's Carnegie Hall debut, and more super hero guest-stars than you can imagine! And don't miss this issue's sense-shattering photo-cover!

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #234—This time for sure—in addition to our usual STERN-ROMITA JR. Spider-Man magic, there's a special free bonus insert for you this month: the Marvel Comics Guide to Collecting Comics.

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

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- ☐ TEAM AMERICA #6
- ☐ KING CONAN #13
- ☐ G.I. JOE #5
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- ☐ KA-ZAR #20
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